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21 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:

Following are the minutes of the Caribbean Survey Group held in the National Operations Room 2B 913, 21 March 1962.

Following was the attendance at the meeting:

The Attorney General	Mr. Hand
Mr. Gilpatric	Gen Lansdale
Mr. Helms	Gen Craig
Mr. Harvey	Col Patchell
Mr. Goodwin	Mr. Ryan

At Gen Lansdale's request, Mr. Harvey opened the meeting by giving a general operational status report. He discussed teams, etc., in some detail, indicating that the missions of the teams was intelligence collection, controls and the development of latent resistant areas. The quality of the Opa Locka Interrogative Center - reports have been good. 150 are coming in per week on an average of possible intelligence reports. Very little of high level political intelligence has been available. However, tremendous amounts of counter-intelligence is being received. Information on 300 Cuban agents per week, for example. Nothing so far uncovered in the intelligence area changes the basic conclusions made originally by CIA; at the outset of this task. However, for the most part, conclusions have been <sup>con</sup>firmed by further information. Generally sabotage is decreasing in Cuba. The operational problems of putting in agents are getting tougher and tougher. The controls by the Communists in Cuba are getting tighter and tighter and will slow down the operation. Agents must have documents, to get documents you must register, when you register the Bloc informer checks on you periodically. This makes it tough to get ration cards. Some few Cuban agents have been coming in through the OpaLocka Center. Mr. Kennedy asked how about the backlog of refugees - some 75,000 people coming in through Opa Locka in the Miami area prior to beginning of this operations intelligence center there. How about a program to assure that these 75,000 sources are exploited. Mr. Harvey indicated CIA had a plan to get this done, to date they have been unable to hit a big part of the backlog, but in certain special cases have been getting information from them, that they have a plan for this and will handle it when they get the personnel available.

The Department of State has no objection to the release or declassification of this document in full under the provisions of the JFK Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 (PL 102-526)

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Mr. Kennedy brought up the possibility of using Immigration Department people, especially the broader patrol types who can speak Spanish. Mr. Gilpatrick indicated that Senator Hart's Committee has recommended an additional screening center for Cubans, possibly in the New Orleans area.

Mr. Kennedy asked CIA what the vote would be in Cuba as between the Castro and the anti-Castro. Mr. Kennedy asked what are the chances of kidnapping some of the key people of the Communist regime? 1,2

Gen Craig was asked to report on DOD participation. He first discussed CIA support in general, that during the first phase of the operation, DOD's primary role would be to support State-CIA and USL in the intelligence gathering phase and in the interim period to be prepared at a moment's notice to intervene in Cuba to prevent a Hungarian type operation or to exploit any possible opportunities that might occur. The results of the evaluation of the risk involved in USAF sheep-dipped crews and with sanitized aircraft making supply drops to agents and to Cuban guerrillas was discussed. The Air Force's general conclusions were read to the Group with the indication that operation initially would possibly be much more successful than those in the latter phases, inasmuch as they would be accomplished with surprise and before the Cubans had an opportunity to figure the modus operandi, etc., and build up a guard against it. Subsequently, they might produce more effective counter-actions but that on-balance, generally speaking, such operations had a good chance of success. The fact that Gen LeMay and the Joint Chiefs consider this type of operation to involve more of a risk than the Avon Park Training Project for Cuban infiltrators would have entailed was emphasized. The sanitizing of 2 aircraft and sheep dipping of 2 aircraft crews by the Air Force was discussed. The assistance by the Navy to CIA in small boat operation and in general maritime assistance was discussed. Avon Park, suitable navy commander for small boats, the beach (upper) testing, PT boats, were discussed as specific projects. It was brought out that the following policy matters among others were included as

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Major policy decision that must be made in providing adequate DOD support to CIA: questions of non-attribution, the extent to which US bases and facilities should be utilized for training Cuban refugees, the extent to which armed forces personnel will be employed, Caribbean Survey Group projects, to what extent US armed forces personnel will be employed within the territorial boundaries of Cuba, to what extent over-flights of Cuba, for purposes of leaflet drops, resupply and diversion, to what extent will Guantanamo be used as a base for agents, like black flights and black broadcasts, to what extent will the use of British controlled and other foreign areas for staging areas be permitted and finally, what is the priority of operation Mongoose as compared to other projects and operations such as South Vietnam and Berlin at the current time. In the latter connection, that is, the question of priority of Mongoose, it was emphasized to the Attorney General that to date we had not had particular trouble in this area but that inevitably we would run into trouble areas, particularly in regard to logistics matters, that to date, this had been handled through the command channels, for example, Gen Decker who had a little trouble in this area in getting stockpiles and supplies and equipment, logistic lift for the Army had handled it by making decisions through command channels without designation a priority and that ~~the~~ ~~since~~ to date the preparation and planning had been going forward smoothly, but that the time would come when the decision would be made as to which would get the priority for example, would good, equipment, etc, earmarked for Vietnam and Berlin and move to stockpiling areas for those could they be used in a Cuban operation?, or would Cuba take priority with others take priority? Mr. Gilpatric indicated he would like to try to solve this problem at Defense level without referring it to anyone higher. He asked that he be kept informed of this situation as it develops into a real problem area. Have Col Knight keep me informed on this situation so that we could let Mr. Gilpatric know by way of the JCS when the time comes that we should do so. I then discussed reaction times on Plan 314 315, Quick reaction times. I indicated to the Group that

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CINCLANT WAS CURRENTLY engaged in normal channels and various means including stockpiling, repositioning, etc. in order to reduce reaction times and were currently making us a reaction time ladder beginning at d minus 12 days and going up to d so that at any particular time it would be possible to orient the military situation with the political situation in terms of whether or not the project was getting hot. This would permit us to have CINCLANT if it did not involve tipping off the operation to go to a d minus 10 condition, for example, that somewhere along the spectrum in the ladder, there would be a point at which you could not go further towards preparation without tipping off your hand or take unacceptable risk, that we would discover this point and have this kind of planning chart prepared for use in the future. In the meantime, Defense was bending all efforts to be ready on the shortest possible notice effectively to prevent a Hungarian type debacle happening to us in Cuba.

Gen Craig then covered the organization, staffing and modus operandi of the Caribbean Survey Group Working Group of DOD of JCS and finally ~~ending~~ indicated that the first important mission undertaken by the group was to develop the DOD/JCS position as to the military's stake and proposed role in the ousting of the Communist regime in Cuba. Basically, the policy reflected that Defense will support State-CIA, if necessary, <sup>during</sup> the preparatory phase of operation of Mongoose in terms of supply, transportation, personnel and bases, establishes the point that the military believe that the continued existence of the Castro Communist regime is incompatible with the minimum security requirements of the US and makes a point that the military could intervene in Cuba without serious offense to national or world public opinion under the following three conditions:

First - if we moved in response to a humanitarian requirement to restore order.

Second - if we announced instant to going in that we were moving in to restore order and would hold free elections and we will withdraw from Cuba as soon as the new government advised that they had the capability to maintain law and order without

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assistance from the OAS nation.

Third - If the operation is conducted as quickly as possible and with sufficient force so that the Communist bloc ability to take effective counter-measures was reduced to a minimum.

It was then emphasized strongly by Gen Craig that the JCS were very apprehensive in regard that the Soviets were capable of taking a page from our book and establish an overseas military base or bases in Cuba. It would greatly increase our national vulnerability and our defense cost as forces would have to be developed or shifted to meet this threat from the South, that the Soviets had an option on which they could foreclose at any time in this regard. They can make decision to establish a military base in Cuba at their will and pleasure with as little as if any cost, that should this be done, ie, military base established by the Soviets in Cuba before we intervene, we would likely be unable to remove them by initiating World War III. Consequently, we feel it mandatory we face the facts squarely now and determine as early as possible whether we can rid Cuba of Communism by covert support of Cubans within and Cuba. It is equally important from logistics planning purposes that we have an early decision as to whether we definitely intend to use military force if the covert means fail. It was emphasized that in the event the Soviets foreclose the option and establish bases in Cuba or accept Cuba as the legitimate member of the Warsaw Pact that either one of these acts would place new dimensions and new facts bearing on the problem and introduced considerations which would postpone positive action indefinitely if not preclude for the foreseeable future the elimination of the Communist regime since to remove the base might well trigger World War III.

Mr. Goodwin indicated to the group that the views I expressed in regard to the conditions under which we could go in without causing too much world consternation and condemnation, and to the options held by the Soviet Russia concerning bases in Cuba, both represented political judgments and were without defense's provisos. Mr. Gilpatrick has indicated he too considered this to be

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a political judgment. I indicated that this was a political-military judgment, there was no doubt about it but that it certainly did involve the Defense and JCS responsibilities, inasmuch as NSAM No. 55 published last June, the President had informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he considered them to be more than military men and should advise him on such matters, when it involved the security of the United States, that the Joint Chiefs of Staff felt obligated to so advise the President. When I made this statement Mr. Kennedy indicated to the effect that this was correct, that it was the responsibility of the JCS to make recommendations of this nature.

Mr. Goodwin did not pursue the matter further at this time. Mr. Goodwin then queried me in regard to the reactions capability of the US forces in other countries of Latin America, that if such a requirement occurred while we were engaged in Cuba, this seemed to be the general thrust of his queries. I indicated to him that Gen O'Mara was currently coming up with estimates based on US reaction for 2 countries to be selected by him in the Caribbean area. Each one to have plans for a company size unit and a battl group size unit. Mr. Gilpatrick then proposed to say at this time that it was the intent of Defense ~~that~~ the 6 - 130s remain in the Panama Canal Zone to give this capability a quick reaction.

*No JCS  
objection*

Mr. Goodwin then was requested to give a briefing on the State situation in regard to the Caribbean Survey Group. He began by saying there was no proof of Cuban infiltrations into other count of Latin America of Cuban exportation of weapons and guerrillas and Communists from Cuba to other Latin American countries. He indicated so far we have been unable to get any evidence to the effect that this was being done. Mr. Kennedy questioned Mr. Goodwin closely on this subject asking why he could not find evidence when we knew this to be a fact. Mr. Goodwin said that everything possible was being done to turn up this evidence but without success. Mr. Kennedy then queried him as to what kind of people were working on this for State. Mr. Helms interceded to say that it was questionable whether Castro was taking such action to the extent he used to take them but that he felt this tendency

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to export Communism by way of guerrillas, arms, etc., had been temporarily played in the low key that CIA too had trouble in turning up positive evidence since it had been unable to do so to date. Mr. Goodwin added that many allegations had been made against Castro but no proof of Cuban aggression had been proven as yet. He indicated the proof of it would be a distinct asset to us at this time. He then said the US should probe harder for splitting the leadership in Cuba. Raul Castro, for example, is a good possibility. We need a way to get next to this man. Mr. Goodwin then said that there were overtones throughout the US that the US was planning an invasion of Cuba, that this was detrimental to our relationships world-wide. Mr. Gilpatric and Mr. Kennedy indicated that no matter what was being done, there would be rumors to this effect and such overtones would be voiced about the country that it was possibly because we were nearing the anniversary of the Bumpy Road operation. Mr. Goodwin said the Cuban Revolutionary Government Representative was in Washington and wanted reassurance that the US planned to help Cuba. Mr. Goodwin indicated that sympathy for Cuba is gaining ground, he mentioned Guatemala and Argentina as examples where Cubans had succeeded in temporary gain in public opinion and propaganda. Mr. Kennedy then asked Mr. Goodwin what the prospects were for the future and Mr. Goodwin said that the prospects for the next 2 or 3 years are terrible.

Mr. Goodwin indicated that one of the items on tomorrow's agenda for the Special Group would be discussion of tractors for prisoners in Cuba. Mr. Helms brought out the fact that members of Congress had been opposed to this and before anything was done in regard to spending US money in this way, Congress must be checked, since they had expressed a desire to be brought into the picture before such a project was laid on.

Mr. Goodwin indicated that the Fiat Automotive Company had indicated to Castro that they would provide him with the tractors needed for \$18,000,000, no down payment, ten years to pay. So far Castro had not accepted this offer.

Mr. Gilpatric who left at this time, indicated that he would be out of town from Friday, 23 March, until 1 April. Gen

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Taylor would also be out of town. He indicated I should deal with Mr. McKamara if anything came up in the meantime requiring DOD Secretary's guidance. However, he said I was free to bring up anything tomorrow morning, 22 March, that I would like for him to handle before he left. I indicated there <sup>were</sup> ~~xxx~~ several outstanding pieces of business which I would like to get his approval on and signature before he left and arranged that I would meet him at 1000p, 22 March, in his office. He indicated also he would like to have the risk paper ready to be referred to the Special Group on 22 March. I indicated this could be done since JCS had already approved it and it was ready for his signature and reference to Gen Lansdale.

Mr. Ryan of USIA then presented the following information from that agency. They are increasing the Cuban coverage in radio to 3 hours a day. No direct jamming has yet been experienced and tendency to edge in on wave lengths being used has been noticed. He mentioned the refugee children as being a good propaganda possibility, one which we should exploit. There are 8000 children being sent out of Cuba in order to avoid the Communist indoctrination and the hard times experienced in Cuba now. This should be exploited. Their comic books are being prepared, target being the fact that Communism is the enemy of religion. Another idea is the fact that the Communists have taken over the Havana University. This is being propagandized.

Another project is the defector situation, which USIA is pushing through television coverage. Mr. Ryan added that US will be flayed and criticized no matter what she does in this area in Latin America, but we should get going with a counter-force operation to counter such criticism. The US seems to have a built-in resistance in Latin America. People just naturally do not like the US, as far as their verbal reaction to our actions. They consider the US an aggressor verbally. It is proper to criticize the US in this area. However, a counter-force can help. Most Latin Americans realize that the US must do something about Cuba but their first reaction, nevertheless, will be if we do anything about Cuba to criticize the US, this is the manner of the beast.

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Gen Lansdale indicated that we should exploit the emotional possibilities of the 8000 Cuban children mentioned by USIA.

Following comments made by Mr. Robert Kennedy: The work involved in the last 2 months has helped us to develop the problem we are up against in Cuba. We now fairly well understand the steps we must take in the future, some of these steps we do not like but nevertheless, they are inevitable. It is not conceivable at this time to call for invasion of US forces in Cuba, however, this summer, fall and next year may change all this. In this first phase, we must find out the situation in Cuba and maybe take steps beyond that. We know more now and we are keeping ourselves informed. We know what we can do, we know what is required. It is not like the situation was last April with regard to our preparedness. The President and his chief advisors consider this the highest priority project in the Government. A serious situation has been existing in Cuba for several years and it will get more harmful. The President is most anxious we be able to do something about this to change it. Gen Lansdale's leadership in this project has pushed forward. You are making progress, doing good work. There is a possibility that the Berlin and South East situation would have an impact on developments in Cuba. We must be ready to exploit any change that occurs for us. All of this work and effort is essential and the President keeps an appraisal on it almost on a daily basis. The President is prepared to do whatever has to be done, we must use our imagination. Mr. Kennedy expressed complete satisfaction with the Group working on the project now with Gen Craig, Mr. Harvey and Mr. Helms. He did not mention anyone else representing other departments. We need push more effort, imagination. He feels the Group is up with the Task he urged for us to go on and he indicated he would be watching us closely on a daily basis to see how we are doing and to help us if needed.

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